Freddy Vs. Eminem? Robert Englund Talks 'Nightmare' Scenarios

Iconic horror actor discusses sequel, prequel possibilities.
By Shaheem Reid
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March 20, 2007 / 2:22 PM
Since 1984, we've seen Freddy Krueger hit the big screen eight times. He's fought everyone from sleep-deprived teens and their vengeful parents to dream warriors to his most formidable foe, Jason Voorhees. So who else could the iconic slasher possibly have left to fight? Maybe Slim Shady?

"That would be a good throw-down, huh? If they ever get him out of divorce court," Englund joked last week about a dream battle between Eminem and Freddy Krueger.

On the serious tip, the 59-year-old actor – who says he's actually a big fan of Em and Jay-Z, as well as the Arcade Fire and Hard-Fi – revealed that, in reality, there really isn't much demand to resurrect his most popular character. Krueger last made it to the theaters in 2003's "Freddy vs. Jason," which ended with Voorhees carrying Krueger's severed head under his arm. The decapitated Freddy still managed to wink.

"We were going to do it with Ash from the 'Evil Dead' movies," Englund said about a sequel to "Freddy vs. Jason." "['Evil Dead' director] Sam Raimi, now that he has all his 'Spider-Man' movies and all that money, I'm sure he's going to remake 'Evil Dead.' I think that's what him and ['Evil Dead' star] Bruce Campbell wanna do. But I've heard [the movie studio] is in talks with John Carpenter [director of the original 'Halloween']. So maybe Freddy and Jason are going to meet up with Michael Myers. I also hear they have a really good prequel script to 'A Nightmare on Elm Street' being passed around. And there was talk that John McNaughton, director of 'Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer,' was attached. Which means that maybe they would be making a prequel to the original 'A Nightmare on Elm Street' with me out of the makeup for a while. You get to see Freddy Krueger, the early crimes. Freddy Krueger, the early years."

Englund says he doesn't have any input on the "Nightmare" movies until he signs on to act in them. Even then, his input is not as major as you would think – though he cites the famous Freddy line "Welcome to prime time, bitch!" as his brainchild. He mostly lets the director and writer handle the duties of the script.

"Sometimes we've made mistakes," Englund said. "We [portrayed] Freddy too funny or we've taken out of the dream. We've made mistakes, but I sort of have a sixth sense now. I have a radar for what Freddy would or would not do. If they did a prequel where Freddy gets caught, they should do it like a 'Law & Order' episode. Whoever plays the lawyers – Freddy's lawyers – those would be really great roles. Something like James Woods on 'Shark.' ... The audience is going to know that Freddy goes on to kill another hundred more people. I like the idea of getting some hot, interesting actors to play the Freddy lawyers."

Englund isn't so excited about the prospect of having another actor play Freddy, however. There's been talk about redoing "Friday the 13th," given the fact that over-the-top serial killers Leatherface and Michael Myers have gotten Hollywood makeovers recently.

"Sooner or later, somebody else is going to have to play the part," Englund admitted. "But I can still do Freddy in the makeup. All I gotta do is lose 5 pounds. Nobody moves like me or talks like me. Sooner or later, I'll have to pass the baton. I don't know if they'll remake the first one, because that's sort of considered the classic and the scariest. I'm a big fan of Wes Craven's 'New Nightmare.' Even though part one and part three are the fans' favorites, I can still see where we were running out of money on the budget for those films. We had a really low budget, so maybe [the first one] deserves to be remade. The remake of 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre,' I really like it. 'The Hills Have Eyes' remake really worked on me.

"These young directors are doing some great work," he added. "I have some new movies coming out, 'Heartstopper' and 'Hatchet,' and 'Behind the Mask' [is] out now. These young directors are keeping me young and keeping me on my toes. I think a redo of 'A Nightmare on Elm Street' will be successful, but I think they need to wait awhile. I would like to see the prequel. Maybe I could work on that one. Dye my hair red and play Freddy as the janitor at the school going after kids."

"Behind the Mask: The Rise of Leslie Vernon" opened in theaters Friday, and in it, Englund actually plays a goodie. His character, Doc Halloran, is on the trail of a homicidal psycho who chooses to videotape his exploits in a documentary.

"It's got a little bit of 'Blair Witch' to it," Englund said. "A little bit of Wes Craven's 'Scream' ... a little bit of 'Spinal Tap.' It's got all of those things going [on in] it. Then it mutates and morphs into a full-blast horror movie in the end. So it's really scary too. With 'Behind the Mask,' the pressure's not so much on me. It's more so on the actor Nathan Baesel, because he's the serial killer in this. I've taken on the role sort of like Donald Pleasence in the 'Halloween' movies. I'm obsessed with finding the killer. I play this psychiatrist who treated him years ago and let him escape. So the pressure wasn't on. It's more fun for me to let the kids put the makeup on and let them go crazy.

"In 'Heartstopper,' I also play a good guy," he continued. "In 'Hatchet,' I play what is kinda referred to as the red herring, the guy that tries to fool you."

Expect to see "Hatchet" in theaters April 27 and "Heartstopper" on Halloween.

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